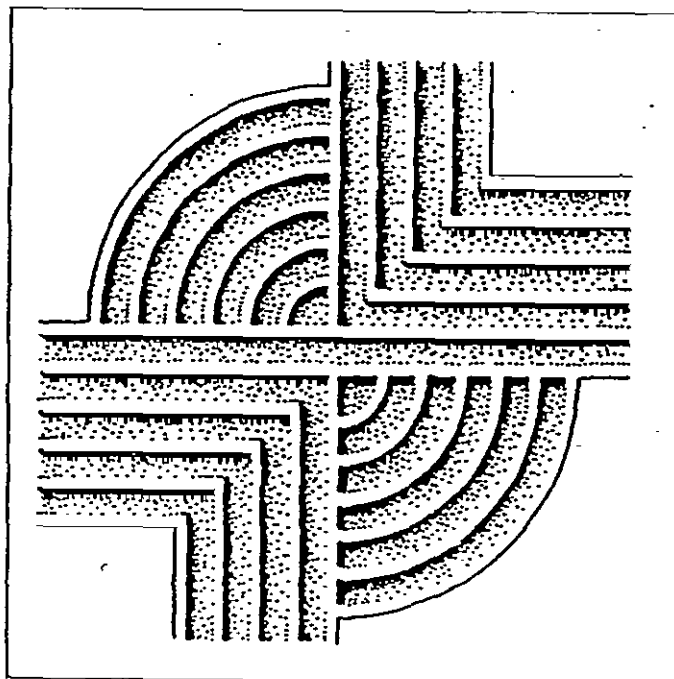


ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING OF 38BU891, HILTON HEAD ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 97

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING OF 38BU891,
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Chicora Research Contribution 97

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Introduction

In July 1992 Chicora Foundation, Inc. conducted an intensive archaeological survey of the 70 acre Sea Pines Senior Living Center for Mr. Ray Pittman, agent for the developer of the tract. This tract is situated just southwest of Bay Point Marina, adjacent to Broad Creek, on Hilton Head Island in Beaufort County. The tract is bounded to the west by Broad Creek, to the north by Broad Creek and privately owned property, to the east by Bay Pines subdivision, and to the south by Point Comfort Woods subdivision.

As a result of the survey two sites, 38BU891 and 38BU1299, were located. Both were recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (Adams and Trinkley 1992).

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History concurred that 38BU1299 was not eligible for the National Register, but found 38BU891 potentially eligible for the National Register. As a potentially eligible site, additional testing was requested to definitively determine eligibility (letter from Mr. Charlie Hall to Mr. Fritz Aichele, September 30, 1992).

This report provides a discussion of the archaeological testing of 38BU891 sufficient to allow the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office to determine the eligibility of the site for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The project was coordinated with Ms. Jill Foster, Long-Range Planner with the Town of Hilton Head Island and Archaeological Investigations Approval 92-17 for the archaeological investigation was received November 3, 1992.

Site 38BU891 was originally identified in 1986 by Chicora Foundation's reconnaissance level archaeological survey for the Town of Hilton Head Island (Trinkley 1987). It is situated along the bank of Broad Creek in the north central portion of the survey area. During the July 1992 intensive survey by Chicora Foundation, 33 shovel tests were placed at 50 and 25 foot intervals in the site area. Eight (24.2%) evidenced moderate to heavy shell midden or artifacts, while the remaining 25 tests (75.8%) contained very sparse shell or were negative. The midden areas were located within 25 feet of the marsh edge. Shell was also found eroding from the creek bank. It appeared that the majority of the site had eroded into the marsh of Broad Creek since only the shovel tests immediately adjacent to the marsh revealed artifacts or shell midden. An exception was in the northern-most portion of the site where artifacts were found extending 100 feet inland. Despite finding surface scatters of shell adjacent to the southern portions of the site, shovel testing yielded no artifacts or midden there.

The site extends for 400 feet along the marsh and inland 25 feet except in the northern-most area where it extends 100 feet. The central UTM coordinates are E521140 N3559700 and the soils are classified as somewhat poorly drained Seewee fine sands. Soil profiles indicated that the top horizon was generally 0.9 feet in depth (Munsell Color 10YR3/3). Subsoil exhibited a Munsell Color of 10YR6/4. Midden was generally found between 0.2 and 0.9 feet in A horizon soils. Artifacts recovered through shovel testing and surface collection consist of two St. Catherine's Cordmarked sherds, one St. Catherine's Fabric Impressed sherd, and two Coastal Plain Chert flakes.

Field Methods

The additional testing agreed upon by the developer, the SHPO, the Town of Hilton Head, and Chicora Foundation, Inc. consisted of mechanical stripping three 10 by 20 foot areas (600 square feet) in the northeastern area of the site, inland

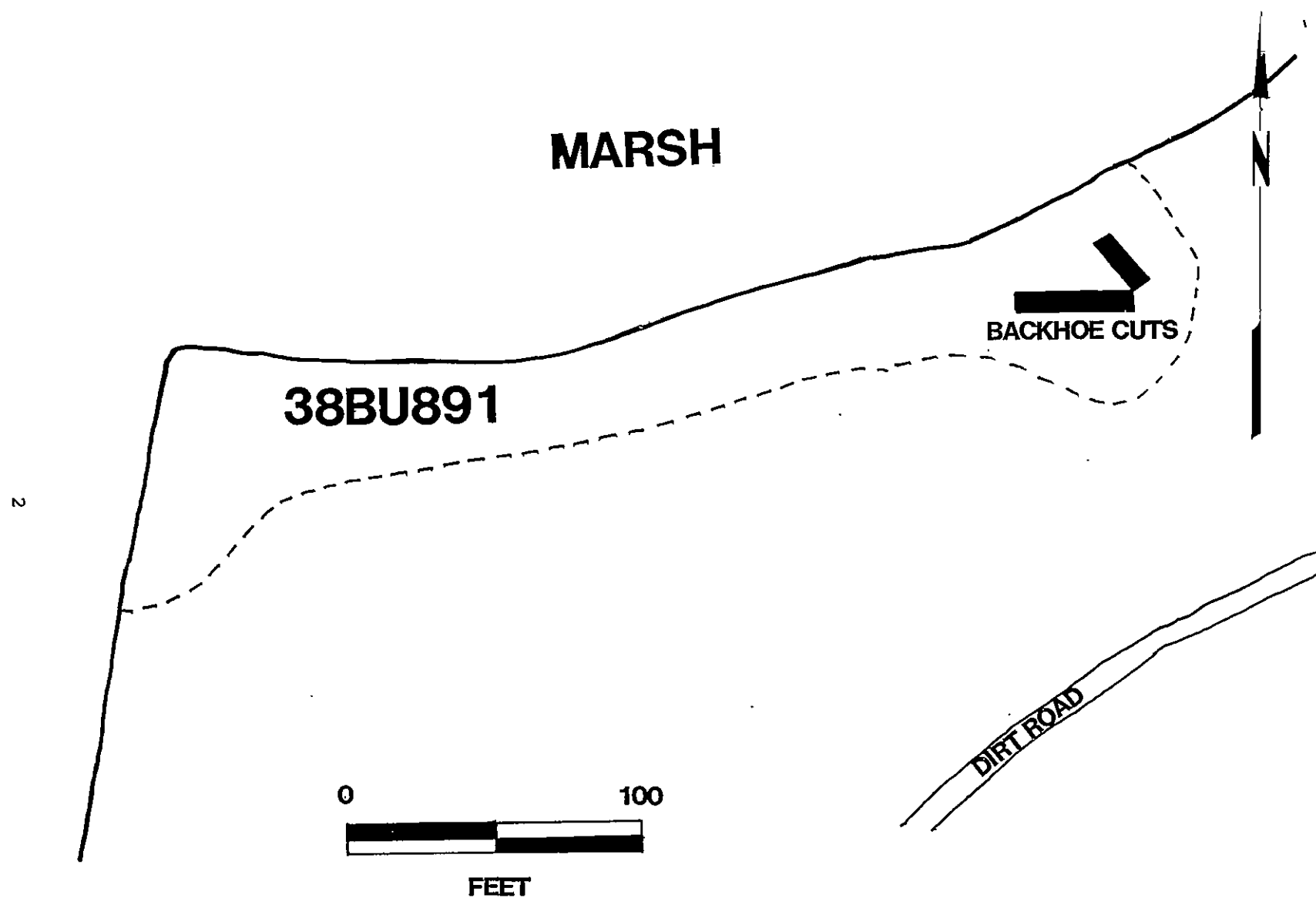


Figure 1. Areas mechanically stripped at 38BU891.

from the shoreline shell midden. The stripped areas would be shovel scraped to locate any cultural features, and the areas would be photographed.

Field work conditions were good and one person day was devoted to the study (in addition to the time of the backhoe operator, provided by the client). The report preparation (including laboratory studies) was conducted on November 30, 1992. The field notes and photographs from this project will be curated at The Environmental and Historical Museum of Hilton Head Island.

Results and Recommendations

One 10 by 20 and one 10 by 40 foot area (Figure 1) were mechanically stripped in the northern non-midden portion of 38BU891. These areas, providing 600 square feet of open area, were located to maximize understanding of intra-site use as well as to minimize damage to larger trees (a condition of the Town of Hilton Head permit). The stripping was conducted by the front bucket of a backhoe, operated by Ken Woods of Cleland Construction Company.

Stripping in these areas revealed no cultural features. In fact, investigation of the spoil, as well as flat shovelling, yielded no prehistoric artifacts, although a few small shell fragments were recovered.

As a result of these investigations, site 38BU891 is recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The only seemingly intact area of the site contains no subsurface features and very sparse amounts of artifacts. No additional work is recommended at this site.

Sources Cited

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